

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 RABAT 00888 181637Z

42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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O 181550Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7724

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T RABAT 0888

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, JO, MO, US, IR

SUBJECT: ASSISTANCE FOR MOROCCO

REF: STATE 037576

1. ON RECEIPT REFTEL I ASKED MUSLO CHIEF, COLONEL SALISBERRY, TO CONVERT OPERATIVE PORTIONS INTO LETTER TO BE TAKEN UP WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS OF NATIONAL DEFENSE ADMINISTRATION. LETTER WAS PREPARED IMMEDIATELY BUT IT PROVED DIFFICULT TO CONTACT NDA OFFICIALS AS THEY WERE ALL IN FEZ WITH KING.

2. COLONEL SALISBERRY THEREFORE PROCEEDED TO FEZ AFTER-NOON OF FEBRUARY 17. HE WAS RECEIVED BY GENERAL BEN AISSA AND LT. COL. ACHAHBAR THAT EVENING. THE TWO MOROCCANS SEEMED PREOCCUPIED AND PRESSED AND NOTED THEY HAD AN IMMEDIATE APPOINTMENT WITH THE KING. BOTH OF THEM READ THE LETTER AND PROFESSED TO UNDERSTAND IT. COL. ACHAHBAR ASKED IF THE HOWITZER AND RECOILESS RIFLE TRANSFERS WERE PART OF CURRENT GOM FMS OR WERE INDEPENDENT. HE WAS INFORMED THAT THEY WERE NOT TIED TO CURRENT GOM FMS. GENERAL BEN AISSA STATED THAT THEY WOULD DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH THE KING AND TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION. BEFORE DEPARTING FEZ THE NEXT MORNING COL. ACHAHBAR WAS CONTACTED TO SEE IF HE HAD ANY QUESTIONS ON THE MATTER.

SECRET

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PAGE 02 RABAT 00888 181637Z

HE SAID HE DID NOT AND THANKED COL. SALISBERRY FOR COMING

TO FEZ WITH THE INFORMATION. HE STATED THAT THE KING HAD THE LETTER AND THEY WERE AWAITING HIS INSTRUCTIONS ON THE MATTER.

3. WHILE SALISBERRY WAS EN ROUTE TO FEZ, MINISTER OF COOPERATION MOHAMED BENHIMA (WHO IS CLOSE TO KING AND STANDS IN FOR FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI DURING LATTER'S FREQUENT ABSENCES) CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE (5 P.M. ON FEBRUARY 17). HE REFERRED TO SECRETARY'S MESSAGE ON ARMS DELIVERY WHICH EMBASSY HAD SENT TO PALACE ON FEBRUARY 14 VIA FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE SAID KING WAS MOST ANXIOUS THAT EVERYTHING BE EXPEDITED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. I REPLIED THAT WE TOO WISHED TO MOVE AHEAD EXPEDITIOUSLY AND THAT WE HAD RECEIVED ADDITIONAL WORD FROM WASHINGTON ON TECHNICAL ISSUES THAT HAD TO BE DEALT WITH. I NOTED THAT COLONEL SALISBERRY WAS ON HIS WAY TO FEZ AT THAT MOMENT, TO TAKE THESE MATTERS UP WITH SENIOR NATIONAL DEFENSE OFFICIALS. BENHIMA SEEMED PLEASED.

4. IN THE ENSUING DISCUSSION WITH BENHIMA, I STRESSED POSITIVE U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARD MOROCCO AND CONCERN FOR MOROCCO'S CURRENT PROBLEMS, WHILE ALSO EMPHASIZING U.S. CONCERN THAT MOROCCO'S REGIONAL DISPUTE WITH ALGERIA NOT BECOME INTERNATIONALIZED. I SAID THAT IN VIEW OF THIS LATTER CONCERN, MY GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED IT WOULD BE BEST FOR ALL CONCERNED FOR U.S. TO STAY IN BACKGROUND AS FAR AS PUBLIC APPEARANCES WERE CONCERNED.

5. I EXPECT POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM PALACE SOON.
NEUMANN

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